5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

mischievous and aggressive, but also a trickster who (vainly) attempts to deceive his father for his own advantage.[1] Westermann[2] quotes a text in which Nyikang commends a liar (perhaps a licensed jester), and another in which it is made clear that it was Dak's cunning which resulted in the catching of one of the creatures, described as a *juok*, with which the Shilluk kingdom was originally built up. The traditions of the Shilluk kings recorded by Hofmayr give details of their duplicity and cunning, their military prowess, and their cruelty and caprice. In this way they are approximated to God for these, and particularly intelligence and knowledge, are qualities by which a man manifests the power of God in him. The very nature of the election to the Shilluk kingship gives an advantage to the clever, as well as to the ruthless and brave, and the office must constantly have offered opportunities for intrigue and homicide. These features of 'divine kingship' tend to be somewhat elided in European accounts of the sacred character of the office, but some of the interest of the Shilluk kingship lies in the fact that the sort of sacredness it represents is little associated with an ethical code. Nyikang and the kings, along with God, are nevertheless for the Shilluk the sanctions for the customary rules and norms of behaviour. Thus the sanction for the customary moral order of Shilluk society is not conceived primarily in ethical terms, but as a manifestation of successful power and intelligence. So the test of kingship is success in the widest sense, and an unsuccessful king is soon killed by his rivals or disposed of by his retainers.[3]

Social Values: Cleverness and Success

That intelligence and success are attributed to the favour of God may be seen in other ways. Spirits, or those who are divinely inspired, are shown in Shilluk stories to be both clever and successful. They know more than others, and they can turn this knowledge to their own advantage. The Shilluk *ajuogo* (diviners), whose power is said to come from *juok*, are such people, and Oyler says of them that 'the Shilluks think of the witch-doctors or medicine men as good, not because their lives are good, nor yet because their practice is good, but because they are looked upon as the channels through which occult powers may be transmitted to men'.[4] They are personally prosperous because they are necessary, and they are necessary because they know better than ordinary men how to achieve success; such a divinely inspired person may therefore be approached for help in stealing

[1] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 61. [2] 1912, p. 166.

[3] I have deliberately omitted any discussion of the killing of the Shilluk king, which by some authorities is said to be a ritual putting to death when the king's powers fail. The evidence for this is very confusing; in the records of the kings given by Hofmayr (1925), some clearly have died or been killed without ceremonial. It is difficult to reconcile this with the suggestion made by some authorities that the killing of the king is a ritual act performed to maintain the fertility and vitality of the land, cattle, and people, and that the ceremonial killing is believed to be essential for this, though misfortune for the whole land may later be attributed to some inadequacy in the funeral rites.

[4] Oyler, 1920.

643 When the Reth's army begins to move out to meet Nyikango's, all the people of Debalo run away clapping the handles of their spears, meaning that the Reth will never return to Debalo until he dies. As he goes out a bull is laid down on his path, whereupon he walks over it in front of the procession, pulling another bull by the tail. The latter is covered with white cloths and is meant to reach Fashoda, being dragged in this manner—Fashoda is about two and a half miles from Debalo. The spear from the shrine at Bol and another from Lul are also brought for the coronation ceremony.

Now scouts are sent to see if Nyikango's army is approaching and to report the news back to the Reth. In the Reth's army the people carry some dura stalks representing spears with which they fight with the army of Nyikango by throwing them. The members of Nyikango's army carry long thongs of twisted grass which they use as whips to disperse the Reth's army, so that they will leave the Reth in [753] their hands to be taken by the spirit of Nyikango. The whips are filled with the [828] spirit and the people are frightened by them, as being touched by the whip is enough to produce madness unless gifts are offered to Nyikango's people. Princes are not [644] allowed to go near the Reth during the procession, because if the Reth is killed by [669] any of them during the coronation procession from Debalo to Fashoda the coronation is not postponed, but the people at once seize a nearby Prince, or the prince who killed him, to replace the slain Nyireth—he is not yet Reth, as he has not been possessed by the spirit of Nyikango—and the coronation continues. Because of this danger during the procession the Reth has to be protected by his policemen and the senior chiefs, who keep the ordinary people away from him.

According to the custom, when the Reth's army reaches the dry khor called Arebajur near Fashoda, which is the boundary between the two parties, a black bull is laid down. The Reth boldly walks over the bull and across to the other side to meet the party of Nyikango. As soon as they come near each other the two armies begin to fight, throwing dura stalks at each other. At that moment the Reth is seized from his army by the people of Nyikango and clothed with the spirit of Nyikango. Here Nyikango's army are busy sending people away with their whips so as to leave the Reth with the group of performers of the ceremony. After this he is taken to a round cleared place and circulated four times there before entering Fashoda. As this is done he is escorted to Fashoda by two holy maidens with the image of Nyikango [644] on his shoulder. These two maidens are taken from the performers of the coronation and later become wives to the new Reth.

In Fashoda he is taken in front of the Nyikango's shrine and placed on a silver coronation seat covered with white cloths, and the image of Nyikango and Dak are held over him in order that he might be possessed of their powers. With him are his sub-chief and the chief of Kwanyiyek holding the legs of the Reth as he is sitting on the seat. He remains in an open place for some time, with the group holding some [775] white cloths as a shelter around him. Meanwhile Nyikango's army beat their drums and sing Nyikango's songs. Here the Reth is said to be shaken by the power of Nyikango as he is being possessed by him.

643 After the performance of this, the Reth and his sub-chief are taken to one of 233 the roughly-made huts near Nyikango's shrine, where they stay for two days, with the Reth keeping the little herd of Nyikango's cattle which was brought from Debalo. This kind of action is done so as to obtain good fortune in the future during his kingship. Here he is treated as he was in Debalo, being made to do the work of a small boy, making fires for these cows and clearing their place. This work is done